C M 175 411 [111] from the body without making the wound much longer because a barb is carved into it and this impedes its being drawn out. If they have time they invariably decapitate those of their enemies whom they wound in battle, and they do this with great dexterity as they find the joint between the vertebrae in a moment and sever the head with one slash of their knives made from the jawbone of the "palometa" [a vicious type of fish which also goes by the name of "piraña"--Translator]. After the head has been severed the scalp is removed and then stretched and dried, and kept in order to celebrate their more important fiestas and to demonstrate their bravery.

C M 175 492 "They used, in the old days, to go about on foot, but they have since become great horsemen having stolen large numbers of horses from the ranches and towns of the Spaniards. From the city of Santa Fé alone and in the space of only 20 years they have made off with some 15,000 horses. That is why they are such good riders today, surpassing the Spaniards. Running after a fleeing horse and using only their lances to help them off the ground they will leap upon it and mount either from the side or from behind. They do not use stirrups and their saddles are very meager affairs, so much so that they often ride saddleless, but so swiftly that only rarely can the Spanish overtake them for they make their horses fly by whipping them with a three tailed lash which they always carry with them. When on the warpath they are happy with but skimpy rations which each carries for himself, and they make fun of the many preparations which the Spaniards make since they, with a small amount of half-grilled meat and whatever they can glean from the countryside in the way of fruit or other things undertake treks of a hundred leagues to wage war, their bed being the hard ground or at most a stiff cowhide. But this is nothing unusual for them since their beds are hardly of better stuff when they are at home.

C M 175 513 554 "These latter are made of straw which is spread all over the floor of their habitation which, although low-ceilinged, is very long in order to allow room for the whole family group to stretch out, each family having its own fire in the center. The oldest lies down [576] at the head in the place of greatest prestige and then, on either side, his sons according to age, followed by the grandchildren and other descendents, each with their families in such a manner that the way in which they lie down to sleep is a living representation of the family tree. They have no covering other than the branches and grasses with which they thatch their hovels, and in which a fire burns continually. The most important family member may have a mantle of deer or nutria skins to keep him warm.

C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 727 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

although they retain their position of ministers of "foreign affairs," representing the tribe before outsiders either to treat some matter, or to form an alliance for either war or peace. And even then their leadership is not of much value for the members of the tribe, the populace, are free to refuse to go to war -- although actually their pride only rarely allows them to hold back. 701

When a chief plans an attack he gets the advice of the old men of the tribe and of other influential persons, and if these do not set their approval upon his plan he nevertheless invites those who will to follow him. 721

Sometimes, though, large scale invasions are planned by the allied chiefs of several villages. When we arrived at the village of Chaguaral, we found there a group of eleven or thirteen chiefs, all Matacos, who were awaiting the arrival of [194] their allies with whom, shortly thereafter, they invaded the territory of other Matacos who three months earlier had given them a good drubbing.

While they are on their way to wage war they vociferate wildly, shouting both threateningly and happily. They dye part of their faces and bodies black and sometimes muss up their already unkempt hair until they look like "lost souls," in the opinion of a Christian Indian. On the eve of battle, those who have the wherewithal deck their hair, waist and ankles with feathers, preferring red or yellow ones, and tie any rag they may have with them tightly about their midriffs. When combat begins they break out with the most bloodcurdling yells. 726 [302]

This business of putting on warpaint is common to almost all savages: it was the custom also among those whom the Romans called barbarians; for example, according to Claudius the Sigambrians used to dye their hair a brilliant red before going into battle. 000

The chiefs have the place of honour in the thickest of the battle, which always results in the death of some of them. If the invaders win, they sack everything, capture the women, the children and cattle, parcel out the booty and set fire to the village. 726 621 727

They give no quarter to the warriors and only rarely do they spare the lives of the older women because they distrust them as 727

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spies or as bad teachers for the children they are carrying off. The very old women are scorned as worthless. But the boys under ten or twelve are taken off and brought up as warriors and husbands for the strengthening of the tribe.

This custom ought not to appear more barbarous than that 680 which the Scythians, who lived between the Don and the Danube, used to practice, which was to cut the throats of all prisoners in order to avoid the trouble of guarding them while they lived out their nomadic lives. And what can we possibly say about this when the Romans, already Christian, hurled their prisoners into the circus, there to be killed by wild beasts and jeered at by the masses?

I make these comparisons merely by way of asserting that human beings are the same in all places and have been so in all periods of history.

With these harsh measures the danger and shame of slavery 727 is avoided, a thing which would anyway be incompatible with the nomadic life they lead, with their perpetual wars, even with the scarceness of food and finally with the independent character of the Indian himself who would prefer to kill or be killed rather than to be a slave. Nevertheless let the extraordinary influence be considered which such practices may have upon the existence and distribution of the tribes, for a series of victories gained by one tribe or by an alliance of tribes can bring about the complete destruction or disappearance of others.

[195] He who kills an enemy, if he has time to hack it off, carries away his scalp, together with hair, ears and even a strip of skin from the back part of the neck. This scalp is molded into the shape of a cup with the aid of a reed or flexible twig which is put in place and sewn around the edges. Right away, still dripping blood, it is filled with liquor and, grasped by the hair, is drained and passed around so that all may drink from it in honor of the victor and mockery of the vanquished. After having made several rounds in this way, the "cup" is grasped by the rim, liquor is poured over the hair until it comes streaming down and those present allow it to trickle off into their gaping mouths just for the fun of it.

I had, in my possession, one of these scalps which had belonged to a Toba chief who was killed by a Mataco friend when

that invasion took place which we had seen in preparation in the village of Chaguaral. Unfortunately moths got into it and ruined it, and I had no other recourse but to throw it out since it was no longer worth sending to Italy together with some skulls and other objects I had collected. 727

This custom of scalp taking is common to all the Indians hereabouts, and is also indulged in by those living in North America. The strange thing is that it was also practiced by the Scythians.

The Germans also were in the habit of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies. Who does not know about Albuin the Longobard who made his wife Rosamund drink from her father's skull some 1300 years ago? [191]

This Indian practice reminds me of something which, in my opinion, reflects the sagacity of these savages:

I was with the colonel of the regiment which was on duty on the frontier, on one of his periodic visits. Near a fort where an Indian tribe was camped the son of the general chief came to see him, (the chief himself did not make an appearance since he wished the colonel to call on him first) and made us a present of some very good and delicious aloja. As it happened that he had just returned from a raid upon the Tobas we asked him if he had not brought back a few scalps. The Indian, as though seeking an excuse for his cruelty said: "The Tobas take the scalps of white men and we take the scalps of the Tobas."

On this same occasion, seeing me dressed in the manner of country people, surrounded by army officers and standing beside the colonel who treated me with great consideration and respect, the Indians whispered among themselves: "Who do you suppose this one is?" And the more sophisticated answered "he must be some president or other!"

It seemed to me as I heard this idle chatter and banter that I was in the midst of a thickly crowded mass of our own lower classes.

[196] One of the superstitions among these Indians is to sally forth on their raiding expeditions with the new moon. They appear to attribute some magical virtue to it, yet they do not 721 821

customarily travel by night for fear of snakes and tigers [jaguars--Translator].

We are already aware of the fact that their weapons are bow and arrows, lances and clubs, all made of wood. They do not employ metal of any sort because they do not possess any and because they neither know how nor are able to work it. If they can get hold of a nail or a knife or an old tin pot they hold it in high esteem and value it greatly. They also use boleadoras ["bolas"--Translator].

They travel hundred of leagues in order to wage war, and do so on foot and in a relatively short time for the Indians are amazing walkers. Naked and therefore light they travel with agility yet without seeming to. They go barefoot and therefore need to lift their feet less off the ground.

The chiefs never fail to exhort their warriors before the battle, and just prior to the attack their captain shouts at them: "Comrades! Here we are now. Fight with courage and do not flee even when the enemy stamps on your feet." A hortative which seems to me well suited to its purpose and quite to the point since it concerns those who will be involved in hand-to-hand combat. They mangle the bodies of their fallen enemies without any pity whatsoever, and in addition to taking scalps, they tear out their hearts, mutilate their members and submit them to a thousand other cruelties.

I do not know whether they dismember their prisoners before killing them or are content to cut their throats, as they would a sheep's, before tearing them to pieces. This is what they did to our interpreter Faustino: first they shot him with arrows by surprise, thus knocking him to the ground where he lay helpless. Right away they sprang upon him and slit his throat while he was yet alive and conscious. Then they cut his head off, tied him to a tree by his feet and stripped him of all he had on.

Here is a dialogue between two Indians after a battle:

First Indian -- "Now I shall tell you what happened on the return journey. I suddenly heard someone in the rear shout 'The enemy is killing our comrades down there in that dip in the road.' I immediately shouted to my followers -- 'Get into battle order,

they are killing our companions. Do not flee, face the enemy even if he stamps on your feet." 727

Second Indian -- "Oh, how I would have liked to be there! The trouble was that I did not see you when you were leaving..."

First Indian -- "You should have seen it! We just sailed into them with lance and club and in a short time had killed a multitude. Oh, we were really avenged there!

"Now I am truly happy: we are even. We scalped one of them, cut the hands off another, tore the heart out of a third, cut the...of another and decapitated many..."

And so he went on making a detailed description of all the acts of prowess performed.

I think that they must attribute some special virtue to the enemies' members. I remember that on one occasion I had in my possession three Mataco skulls picked up at a place where four years previously some forth of them who had been taken prisoners had been killed. The floods had carried off all the skulls except the three I was able to salvage.

I took these skulls with me to my hut which was at a distance of about ten leagues, on the frontier, and put them in my room under a small table which served as my desk.

One stormy night I heard a noise near the door which was open. The puny light given off by the tallow candle only made it more difficult to see and I could not make out the outlines of a black object which was moving about in the darkness of the room. "Who is it?" I shouted, reaching as one may well suppose under the circumstances for the revolver which was lying close by on the table. "Friend...friend...that's all...." and a Mataco chief came towards me with a companion. "What do you want friend?" I answered. "Toba etec" (the Tobas' head) he replied. I picked up one of the skulls and handed it to him, adding "Toba catchia" (bad Toba). The Indian grabbed the skull with his left hand, and as though possessed, started to claw at it and to stick his fingers into the eye-sockets and gaping mouth and then into his own mouth as though to suck them, all the while jumping about and shouting confusedly.

This chief had found out about the skulls but was under the impression that they were Toba, his mortal enemies, and had come

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during the night to celebrate the occasion.

It happened that the local Matacos returned about this time from the sugar harvest in the Salta plantations which were about seventy leagues from my camp, and it befell that every day, for some time, groups of Indians would station themselves at my door and ask me for a Toba head. I would let them have one, always repeating, as it were a refrain: "Toba catchia, catchia...." (bad, bad Toba), and they would go through the usual routine.

Chapter VIII

Religion

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The Chaco Indians have no God. I don't mean only that they do not conceive of God as a thinker or philosopher might but that they do not even conceive of one as do even untutored whites or Chinese.

[198] It is affirmed that the Pampas Indians do have a God, but this report must be considered as a recent importation and due to the continual contact of the Pampas with whites and with their brothers from over the mountains who were converted to Christianity shortly after the conquest.

But if the inhabitants of the Chaco do not know anything about God they nonetheless have their form of worship: the cult of spirits and of the stars.

I believe that there can be no doubt that the Chaco Indians are, generally speaking, as primitive as any of the world's other Indians and savages.

Now some philosopher-historians assure us that man's first religious stage is that of fetichism, which means the worship of fetiches, a word with which the Negroes of Africa signify the brute objects of their adoration.

Without denying that this may be or may have been the case where the Africans are concerned I nevertheless believe, at least regarding our Indians here, that the first stage in religion is not fetichism but spiritism of a sort which will later be described.

The opposite could well be demonstrated but in order not to stray from these my Indians, let me say that I have seen proof positive of conjugal love among polygamists.

We had on board an Indian with his young and beautiful partner, whom he loved and adored as though she were a representation of the Virgin.

In that business of the Indian who was bitten by a snake and whom we treated, his wife came to him immediately and cared for him for twenty days without ever leaving his side.

Chief Pascual, whose wife was captured and carried off in a surprise raid -- she being old and ugly --, organized an invasion, tracked down the attackers, fought like a lion and rescued his partner from the hands of the enemy. These are facts which happened in a short time while I was present in that area.

When an Indian puts in an appearance and asks for something, he never forgets his children, his wife or his relatives: when he receives anything capable of being divided up, he distributes it, not only to the above but also to his companions.

I have also noticed that mothers are always extraordinarily loving with their children; and have noted that the inter-tribal wars and the mass killings of the inhabitants of a given village are always motivated by the need to avenge offences offered against compatriots or relatives. And if this does not reflect loving concern, what does?

[218] They are cruel, but only regarding prisoners of war whom they condemn to death. We are hardly in a condition to judge them for this cruelty since we did ourselves do the very same until recently; put it into wholesale practice against the Indians themselves during the period of conquest, and continue to do so against them even now when we can do it with impunity.

Among the Indians this custom of killing prisoners is necessary for their personal security in the nomadic life they lead in which they are continually exposed to surprise attacks, and it furthermore frees them from the shame of slavery, an unknown phenomenon amongst them. (1) Looked at from another point

1. This does not agree with what is recounted about the Mbayas and other tribes, who, as report has it, have slaves. (Ed.)

Even had this difficulty not existed, the social organization 231
of the American nomads made the keeping of domesticated animals well nigh impossible. In [220] effect, and in spite of the fact that one nation might occupy an immense area, yet it would be divided into small tribes who owned sway over relatively small territories and were (as their survivors still are) continually at war amongst themselves. It follows from this that there was no security, which is an indispensable condition for the raising of animals and for any other peaceful occupation. Even at the present time the Chaco Indians, although they are acquainted with our domestic animals and do on occasion try to raise them, do not do so on a worthwhile scale because the mere fact of their possessing them is a temptation for their neighbors to invade and despoil them. If social life had somehow got to the point of compelling these Indians to gather into large groupings, then, given the range of their vast territories and despite their being nomadic and continually at war, it would always have been easy for them to protect their animals, when invaded, by fencing them into inclosures.

Can the Indians of these parts have been cannibals? This is 266
a question which always arises when we have dealings with savages like these.

In America cannibalism has had adherents among "Hebrews and Samaritans," among "Barbarians and Christians." The savage Caribs and the cultured Mexicans topped off the very best dishes of their cuisine with human flesh. The peaceful Peruvians used not to disdain stews of human blood for their religious feast days, in which they would knead corn bread with the blood taken from the foreheads of babes -- what pious butchers were the gentle and beautiful women devotees of that nation's religion.

In this region of the Chaco, although cannibalism may have been practiced, temporibus illis, (which cannot be proved), at the present time it is either non-existent or else must be considered reduced to its very lowest terms. 727

I shall say nothing about the custom of drinking aloja from 264
the scalp of a prisoner which has been converted into a propitiating cup of vengeance and victory.

I have seen them drink avidly of the blood of cattle 262
slaughtered for our use, but they do not feed exclusively on cattle 272

Just to clarify this I shall cite a personal case which will be helpful to the reader in arriving at an opinion.

I was talking to a chief who was recounting his feats of prowess to me for the first time.

In answer to my question: "Where are you from?" he unexpectedly answered: Num-maitta-ntocq-Téúj-tocuéy, stretching and then drawing back his right arm as he pointed towards the North.

[256] I was very much surprised and said, interrupting him: Ntde-ʾhije? -- "Where?" -- I had understood him to say that he wanted to tell me about a town on the Teuco River, called Umaitá like that town in Paraguay near the mouth of the Bermejo, and my curiosity became excited to a great pitch with the idea that I was about to make an ethnographic discovery of importance.

What he had actually tried to say to me was this: "I-(nu) killed many far away on the Teuco."

Nu ilon ntócq (I have killed many)...; and right away he commenced to count in Mataco from one to four, enclosing his right hand in his left and opening his fingers one by one, all except his thumb. But when he got to four he was at a loss how to go on, yet as he was squatting, he began to make vertical lines in the earth with his finger saying Toj each time he did so, which means "this one," and every now and then he would raise his head and his hand with his thumb concealed by his four fingers and say, looking at me: Uitd toj which means "and this also," and thus he continued about twenty times, always being careful to drive home to me that in addition to the lines he was making on the ground I must remember the original four which he had counted on his hand. At last he put an end to his counting by saying ntocq ntocq which is "many, many."

And this was very true. This chief had been at one time the scourge of the frontier whites and the whip of his Indian enemies until finally, old and much battered by the whites, he left off warring, gained a government pension and settled down with all his followers -- very much reduced in numbers -- near Fort Gorriti, on the left bank of the Bermejo River. It happened that near Fort Aguirre, on the right bank of the Teuco, some 50 kilometers northeast of Gorriti, another band of Indians had attempted an invasion but were themselves the object of a surprise attack in their village, part of their number being killed and others imprisoned.

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These latter, bound and with their hands tied behind their backs, elbow to elbow and forming a chain of some 30 or 40 individuals, were handed over to the chief so that he might put them to death. He did most of the killing himself with a spear. While the massacre was in progress most of the victims remained silent, while others kept up a continual murmuring such as is done in their religious ceremonies. These were, without a doubt, witchdoctors.

I passed through the place of this tragedy five years after the event and could see no sign of human bones belonging to the victims' unburied corpses. The flood waters had carried them off and the winds had covered all remains. Only after much searching and with the help of a soldier who had witnessed the event was I able to find three skulls by digging among some bushes. The national government tried to punish the officer in charge of Fort Aguirre and it [257] is possible that this was done. However, one must accept the fact that there is no possible compatibility between civilized and savage elements; and all individual philanthropy, all a priori reasoning made far from the scene, lose their practical validity in this theater of fighting brought about by the head-on collision of the two races. Each one thinks that the destruction of the enemy is the easiest and also the most natural expedient in the world. Therefore the final extermination of the Redskins at the hands of the whites is inevitable, by means of cold steel, fire, expatriation and mass dispersion as though they were beasts.

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Coming back to the matter of numerals, one must never be led to suppose that these Indians are not aware that 10 fish are half of 20 fish. A dog, when he rushes upon a second bone thrown to him and growls because some other dog tries to get the first bone, is also responding to the same perceptual stimulus. Nevertheless the fact of not possessing an adequate word for expressing this recognition reveals, in my opinion, a lack of abstraction. The form of a language and the very manner in which words evolve from their original sounds owe much to the state of maturity of the speakers' capability for mental abstraction.

Regarding the Mataco words used to indicate the first four numbers, I must say that their great length and the gesticulations which went with them surprised me very much. It seemed to me that each one of these expressions, if it was to justify its accompanying

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

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first place, of course, of the chiefs. The children are adopted as members of the tribe, and they readily amalgamate with it, the more so as the captives are generally well treated and admitted to equal privileges with their conquerors.

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All Indian tribes of the Pilcomayo were formerly scalp-hunters and head-hunters, and some of them still practise this custom. The head of the slain enemy was cut off, the scalp stripped from the scull, and both were kept as a sort of trophy. Shortly before I arrived at the Pilcomayo in 1911, the *Ashluslay* had succeeded in killing nineteen Bolivian soldiers who were marching down to one of the military settlements on the river. The heads of the young men had been cut off and taken home by the Indians. Later on it was reported that their scalps or skulls, fixed on long poles, decorated the entrance of the main Indian village, being used at the great feasts as drinking-cups which were believed to inspire the drinkers with courage. For my own part I have not been able to gather more particulars about these head-hunting practices of the Chaco Indians, nor has any other traveller given information on this point. On the war customs observed by the Argentine Mataco-Vejos, the Italian traveller Pelleschi makes the following statement: »Whosoever kills an enemy wears as a trophy, if he has time to secure it, the scalp with the hair, the ears, and possibly a fold of skin from the back of the neck. He forms it to the shape of a cup by means of a bulrush or a flexible twig, which he binds and stitches all round the edge; then, while still bloody, he fills it with liquor, and holding it by the hair, passes it round to his companions, who empty it as they drink in honour of the victor and in scorn of the vanquished. Another way is to hold the scalp by the edge and pour out the liquor in drops over the hair and jaws.« [1])

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As to the *Tobas*, I have gathered that when they return home after a successful attack a great feast is held, when the spoils taken on the war expedition are brought forth in triumph, dances are performed, and algaroba beer is drunk to excess. Dancing forms an important part of the feast. The victory dance of the Tobas is *Nomi* which is performed by the younger warriors during the day. A special dance is performed round the scalps, hung on high poles in the middle of the village, and beer is drunk from the skulls, but I have no more details about these ceremonies. Nordenskiöld, who during his travels in the Chaco came across a scalp taken by the *Mataco* in one of their wars, mentions in passing that

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[1]) Pelleschi, *Eight Months on the Gran Chaco*, p. 80.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

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»before the Indians parted with their trophy they demanded that their old women should be allowed to sing and dance with it». It is a pity that Nordenskiöld, dominated by his exclusive interest to obtain a rare Indian »curiosity», did not avail himself of the excellent opportunity to inquire as to the ideas which the Indians connected with this scalp-dance of the women. We must look for an explanation from other sources. In the account I have given of the war customs of the Jibaros I have shown that they are wholly founded on magical ideas. The hair and head of the slain enemy is regarded as the seat of his soul or spirit and therefore is full of mysterious power. In fact, through the dances and other ceremonies performed with the scalp or head, the trophy is turned into a fetish which will promote the luck of the victor in various respects. The fact that the women play the most important rôle at the scalp-feasts — which seems to be almost a general rule — is also due to special magical ideas. The most important of the beneficial effects ascribed to the trophy is that it promotes fertility and renders the domestic animals prolific. Since, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of fertility, not only in the human world, but also in the animal world and in nature, it is reasonable to assume that women perform the scalp-dance precisely to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. Such is the case for instance among the Jibaros, where the dance of »supplication» round the trophy is professedly resorted to with a view to making the harvest abundant and the domestic animals prolific. Evidently the Chaco Indians entertain similar ideas. Since the head or the scalp is full of spiritual power we can also easily understand that the Indians believe themselves to be »inspired with courage» by drinking from the trophy.

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Special honour is paid among the Tobas to chiefs who have carried a war to a successful end. The ordinary chiefs receive confirmation in their dignity by the Council of the Old Men, and the young temporary leader, elected for that particular war expedition, is made an ordinary chief in recognition of his merits.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

with a charata (bird, *Ortalis canicollis*) bone that they might rise early, and finally with an owl's bone in order to see and fight in the dark.

Matako always attack at daybreak. They kill only men, young or old, burn the village, and take away as captives the women and children. When my informant was a child his people fought against the Pilaga on the Pilcomayo where they had gone fishing. The last encounter between the Toba and the Matako took place four years ago (1929) near Pozo del Tigre. In consequence of that conflict, the Matako made prisoner a Toba woman, but later on they surrendered her to her people for a payment.

Toba children taken captive by the Matako were raised like Matako children. Later they married women of the tribe and had in general the same rights as the other members of the group.

Not so long ago the Matako practiced scalping. A man who took a scalp gave it to his wife who danced to express her joy at her husband's killing an enemy.

XVIII. Dances

The dances begin at sunset and are continued until one or two o'clock in the morning. These are only for unmarried people and the dancers are always surrounded by the children of the village; they enjoy these affairs very much. Children normally do not take part in the dances, but are sometimes admitted among the dancers in order that they may learn the songs and dances.

1. All participants form a circle with their faces toward the center, the right hand on the shoulder of the person to the right and the left hand on the waist of the person to the left. One of the dancers starts singing very slowly and everybody stamps rhythmically, the right foot marking the time. After a few notes all the dancers begin to sing. The rhythm of the song and the movement of the dancers become livelier and livelier and gradually the stamping develops

726 which was dry at the time. Then, moving along the left bank, they came upon the people of San Martín from the rear, cutting off their retreat. A large number of the latter, mostly women and children [127] were killed or wounded. The Yuto people carried off a child with them as a prisoner.

Divers Religious Beliefs

776 158 Among the spirits the most to be feared are the wilan who possess their victims and sink them into a state of furious madness. Thus, in the San Patricio mission a young girl all at once became pale, her eyes starting from their sockets. She fled, bolting into the wooded area, where she remained for four days. Those who followed her said that her tracks disappeared as suddenly as if the girl had flown through the air.

Another girl got up from a fainting spell during which she had been under the care of four witch doctors and said that a spirit had entered her.

Here is a case which took place in San Andrés a short time before my arrival. A Mataco had gone off to some distance from the village in search of a horse. On the way back he imagined that he saw against [15] a tree, a small luminous being, about the size of a cooking pot, which leaped from tree to tree and finally disappeared in the underbrush. Frightened, our Indian fled to the village where he fell in a faint and was shaken by violent convulsions. Doctor C. Smith had to give him a morphine injection to quiet him. The Indian got better and a few days later felt well enough to go out into the surrounding area. On the way back he had the same experience and suffered like aberrations. His parents, shaking with fright, went to get the doctor so that he might give him an injection. According to Dr. C. Smith, such hallucinations may be the result of kidney trouble, which causes the diseased person to have optical illusions, especially the apparition of luminous spots before the eyes. Certain strange and sinister sounds, also, which the Mataco Indians attribute to spirits [821] are really made by nocturnal birds. And a meteor, which fell into the Pilcomayo during my stay there was explained to me by the Matacos as the fall of an old man with gray hair.